

YOUR UNION

Local 480



Trail, B. C.

February 2018

VOL. 46 No. 1

**Yes, people died
for your union
rights...**

go to...
UNION
THUGS
on
facebook

**No, we're not
exaggerating**



LOCAL 480

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

3:45 P.M. THURS. February 15/2018

Agenda to include:

- ◆ 2018 Budget

We are Online and Live!



www.facebook.com/usw480

You can also find us at: uswlocal480—UnityisStrength

YOUR UNION

EDITORIAL STAFF

Brian Onyschak – President
Leigh Creegan – Editor
Norm Murdoch – Assistant Editor
Fax 1-250-368-5568

The editors reserve the right to edit any or all material submitted



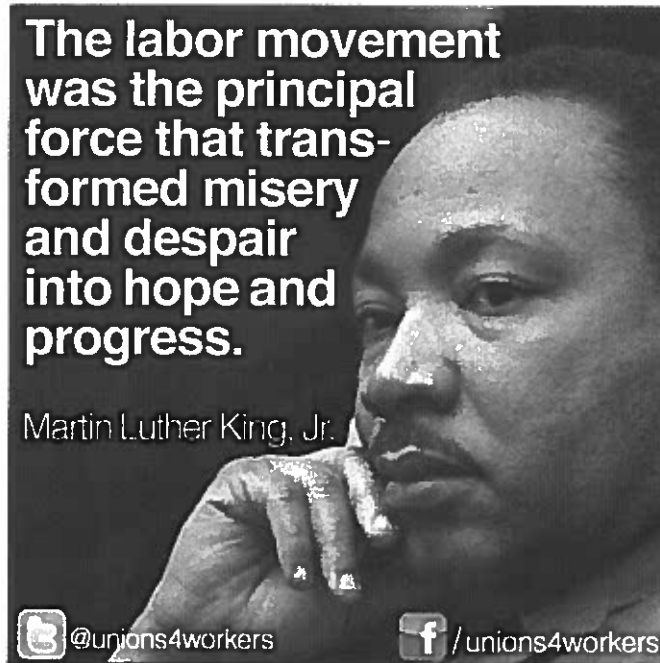
“Your Union” is a member of the United Steelworkers Press Association and abides by the constitution of the organization

Check our website for Local 480 merchandise! Items may be purchased at the hall. All items are proudly union made!

Quote of the Day

The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



What's Inside:

Scholarships	Page 4
Estate Planning Seminar	Page 5
Executive Nominations	Page 11

President's Report

Brian Onyschak, President

The Company's Dam Issue, Problems Scheduling Vacation, and Other Labour Issues



This is my first article as your President, I am excited and looking forward to serving the Membership in this new role. I took over this position as of January 8th, with the retirement of Armindo deMedeiros. During the first couple weeks, I have been busy reorganizing the office and settling in.

In my articles, I will keep you informed as to what is happening on the Property, as well as updating you on the current labour issues across Canada and the world.

As everyone is aware, the Company is in the process of selling their remaining 2/3 interest in the Waneta Dam. They originally had a sales agreement with Fortis. BC Hydro who had purchased 1/3 of the dam back in 2009, had an agreement that if Teck was to sell their remaining interest, BC Hydro had the 1st option to make that purchase. BC Hydro has exercised that option. The BC Utilities commission is currently holding meetings with interested parties to determine if the sale of the dam should be allowed.

Local 480 has applied and been granted intervener sta-

tus. What this means is that we can put forth our concerns regarding this sale.

Our number one concern is the ongoing viability of the smelter.

For years, the Company has stated that they needed this dam in order to have cheap power to run the Smelter. They have consistently stated that because the Smelter is not on a port their transportation costs were very high. This included bringing in the concentrates as well as getting their finished product to the market.

As part of the sale there is a 20 year lease to purchase power at a reduced rate, with Teck having the option for a further 10 years. This deal has us very concerned.

We believe that the best option is for Teck not to sell the dam. Our belief is that this dam was built for the sole purpose of operating the Smelter.

Having said that we cannot find any legal documents to support that. If the sale of the dam is to proceed, the best option for us is BC Hydro. We do

not want this dam sold to private investors. We will continue to voice our concerns to the BCUC, as well as asking for further assurances that the Smelter will always have access to power in order to remain viable. We will keep you updated as to the status of this sale.

Another big issue on the property is the scheduling of vacations. While there are issues all across the property, the number one concern is the Lead Area. With extended shutdowns coming up in the fall the Company is telling us that the bulk of vacations need to be saved for that time.

We have met with the Company and explained that our members should be able to take some vacations throughout the year.

We believe there is enough work during the shutdown to keep our operators gainfully employed.

We have agreed to establish a committee to explore what work could be done during the shutdown. Our hope is that once we identify this work

Continued on next page

members will be allowed to take vacations prior to the shutdown.

The Company approached us a couple of months ago, and told us that they are looking at automation for certain equipment and tasks in the Melting Plant. They invited us to sit in on discussions that they had arranged with the crews.

Out of that came an offer to have Shift Reps. to be part of a committee to discuss automation and inefficiencies in the Melting Plant.

Our members accepted that invitation and had two Reps. from each shift step forward.

The committee met a couple weeks ago, and developed a list of action items to address some areas of concern. From the information I received these meetings went well. We will continue to monitor this and hopefully there will be some positive changes. Thank you to the members that got involved in this initiative.

In the national Labour news on January 16th, Unifor decided to disaffiliate from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC.) Our National Director Ken Newmann has called the decision "regrettable and disappointing."

According to our Director, Unifor launched a raid upon the Membership of UNITE HERE Local 75 in Toronto. This is something they could not do if they remained affiliated with the CLC. The United Steelworkers position is clear: Unifor must cease its raiding activities and return to the CLC.

Working people need a strong central labour body like the CLC more than ever. Let's hope that the parties can resolve their differences and get back to staying united and putting our efforts toward making Canada better for all working people.

In solidarity
Brian

LOCAL 480'S - 2018 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Once again, Local 480 will be sponsoring Scholarships and Bursaries to our local senior high schools. The information outlining the requirements to apply for one of these scholarships has been sent to the area high schools (JL Crowe Secondary, Stanley Humphries Secondary, Salmo Secondary, and the Kootenay Alternate Learning Centre.)

If you have a son/daughter who will be graduating this year and plans to further their education, please talk to them about applying for one of these awards. These scholarships will be presented at local graduations ceremonies to area students who meet the criteria.

To qualify, the student must write an essay of 500 to 1000 words on "*What has been the role of the Union movement in the West Kootenay's, and in particular, Trail?*" We shall evaluate those essays on content, accuracy of information, form and grammatical correctness.

Essays must be submitted to either the School's Counsellor, or Local 480, no later than Friday, May 4th, 2018.



Benefits Co-ordinator Report

Jeff Schuepfer, Benefits Co-ordinator

Estate Planning-Ensuring The Best for You and Your Family

Brothers and sisters,

I am looking at putting on another free estate seminar on March 13th at the Local 480 Union Hall. Estate and financial planning are extremely important as an unprepared estate can devastate your family. I do not know anyone who wants to pay more money to the taxman rather than having saved money to help their loved ones.

All 480 and 9705 members, whether you are a new start, all the way up to members who are getting ready for retire-

ment should have a plan in place in case the unthinkable should happen. The estate seminar will help you plan for writing your Will, Power of Attorney and the roll of an Executor(s)

John Merlo of Money Works/Q Trade at KSCU and Holly Pender Love, a certified pre-arrangement counsellor with Alternatives Funeral and Cremation Services will be back to facilitate the seminar which will roughly take one hour of your time to help you save more and donate less to the government.



Please let myself know if you and or along with your partner would like to attend this seminar by calling 250-368-9131 or email me at benefits1@usw480.com Please let me know which seminar you are able to attend. There will be an early seminar at 3:45pm and another at 6:00pm.

Also looking at a seminar at a future date, which would run about a half hour on RRSP's and TFSA's.

PENSION BREAKDOWN

Another year behind us translates to some of our members who are now starting to ponder on a retirement date. This is one, if not the most important choice you will make in your life and should be made with some thought behind what you and or along with your partner want to do.

If you are a member who is contemplating retirement I want to provide a breakdown along with the pros and cons of taking the Commuted Value vs. the monthly pension.

We will use a Local 480 member who as of December 31st of 2017 is 57.8 years of age and has 37.23 years of pensiona-

ble service, and is electing to take the commuted value of their pension. The Commuted Value for this individual is \$818,000 which by law under the BC Pension Act and Income Tax Act will be broken down as follows:

Pre- 93 service, Non Locked-in RRIF (non-taxable) is \$131,000.

Post-92 service, Locked-in RRSP (non-taxable) is \$261,000. Excess, cash portion (taxable, exception if RRSP room) is \$426,000.

The non-locked in RRIF is what you would be drawing off of and would have no maximum withdrawal limit.

The locked in RRSP, if the member so chooses could start to draw on that at age 55. If that is your choice the RRSP will be converted to a LIF. Maximum and minimum withdrawal rates apply based on age of withdrawal.

The cash portion (subject to taxes) will also be what you will be drawing off of. The disadvantage with the cash portion is it will be taxed. This is something you really need to consider and ask yourself why would I have worked all those years to get to where I am today only to give many years of work back to the taxman.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Other disadvantages of taking the Commuted Value of your pension is the longevity risk – the risk of running out of money before you die. You will also sever all ties to post retirement benefits, the Company one time life insurance, MSP premiums (if true, the province will eliminate in 2019). Like any investment you are at the mercy of the markets.

Advantages are, medically if you do not have a prolonged life expectancy with the help of having a Will, Power of Attorney, Executor(s) the money will pass to those named. If you have a partner who will have a pension of their own and post retirement benefits for the both of you is another way of financially looking at your future.

Remember, you can apply for CPP as early as age 60 with a penalty for collecting be-

fore the age of 65. Old age will kick in at age 65 (need to apply for).

If the same member waits till the beginning of January 2019, age 58.84 and with 38.26 years of pensionable service you have no choice but to take the monthly pension. The breakdown is as follows:
38.26 years x 81.50 = \$3118.19
plus \$956.50 bridging till age 65.

=
\$4074.69 gross/month.

The member's lifetime pension will adjust another \$1.50/month of service as per the collective agreement as of June 1st 2019 from \$3118.19 to \$3175.58 gross/month.

You can apply for CPP as early as age 60 with a penalty to the amount for collecting earlier than age 65.

Your bridging will cease at age 65 but old age security (which you apply for) will kick in.

Maximum for CPP as of Feb. 15th 2018 = \$1,134.17

Maximum for OAS as of Feb. 15th 2018 = \$586.66

WHEN YOU APPLY FOR CPP AND OAS YOU WILL NEED TO INDICATE TO TAKE THE APPROPRIATE TAXES FROM THEM.

Advantage of taking the monthly pension you will retain your extended health benefits but will LOSE DENTAL, VISION CARE AND THE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACCOUNT. You also retain the one time Company life insurance and MSP premiums (if not eliminated). You will have a set amount of pension money coming in per month which makes it easy to budget for future purchases/events.

BENEFITS PLAN

Members who think they have not been reimbursed accordingly under our benefit plan must be aware that at the beginning of every calendar year there is a \$25 deductible for each person up to a maximum of \$25 per family. For example, if your first purchase of the year is say a prescription that costs \$100 the \$25 deductible will be subtracted from the \$100 cost = \$75. Coverage for the prescription is 80% applied to the \$75 which works out to \$60. Your cost is \$15.

I have had calls from our members who have had issues with particular benefits under our benefit plan. The majority of those complaints seem to be with the benefits increases we bargained for last summer.

1. Coverage for dental implants are \$2200 per implant.
2. Chiropractor/ licensed naturopath is \$300 per person up to the maximum of \$750 per family.

3. Eye exams are covered under our vision care but will be part of the \$300 per two benefit years or if you have the combined maximum coverage amount of \$600.

If there are any issues with you or your dependents claims regarding our benefit plan you must contact me at 250-368-9131 or email me at benefits1@usw480.com

In solidarity,
Brother Schuepf.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE AND JEWELRY BOX WINNER



On December 20th the lucky winner of the gingerbread house was Marie Mac-Leod! Congratulations to Marie and a big thank you to Heidi McLachlan for making and donating the gingerbread house! The total funds raised were \$242.00 for the BC Professional Fire Fighters Burn Fund Centre, thanks to all who bought tickets!

Another lucky winner on December 20th was Derm Jackman who won a beautiful handmade jewelry box. The jewelry box was kindly made and donated by retired local 9705 president Chuck Macklon. Thank you to all who bought tickets, a total of \$142.00 was raised for the Gordy Steep Sick Children's Memorial Fund.





Health & Safety Committee

Steve Como, Safety Chairman

Major Incidents on the Property

Brothers and sisters,

We have had two very serious incidents that have occurred on the Property.

The first being in the Copper Products Plant, when an Operator was emptying a bulk super sack bag of copper sulfate crystal into the pugger. After cutting the bag, a large hardened lump became hung up in the suspended bag. When the Operator reached in to free up the lump, the lump dropped on the Operator's arm, on the grating and front edge of the pugger.

This incident resulted in the operator fracturing his forearm. This incident resulted in WorkSafe writing two orders on the Company, as well as, several inspection notes.

The 1st order being was:

A worker's arm was pinned and fractured by material being released from a flexible bulk container as he used a hook knife on a pole to cut the container bottom. The

employer has not ensured that machinery and equipment was fitted with adequate safeguards to ensure workers cannot assess a hazardous point of operation.

This is in contravention of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Section 12.2 (b).

Unless elsewhere provided, for in this Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, the employer must ensure that machinery and equipment is fitted with adequate safeguards which ensure that a worker cannot a hazardous point of operation.

The 2nd Order reads:

The Employer does not has established safe work practices for the dumping of flexible bulk containers at the Copper Products pugger. Therefore, the employer has failed to ensure the pugger was,

used and operated in accordance with safe work practices.

This is in contravention of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Section 4.3(1)(b) (ii).

The employer must ensure that each tool, machine and piece of equipment in the workplace is capable of safely performing the functions for which it is used and is selected, used and operated in accordance with safe work practices.

The second very serious incident occurred in No. 2 Slag where we had a furnace explosion, luckily there were no injuries. The incident has been reported to WorkSafe, as well as, the boiler branch. A full investigation is being conducted into the cause of the incident.

In solidarity,
Steve Como



Safety Co-ordinators

Kyle Jorgensen & Chris Vaughan



It's Okay to Talk About It

Mental health, that is.

Growing up in the 80's and even the 90's, it was always the same kind of message... "*Boys don't cry, man up*". The only thing a lot of young men my age ever heard relating to mental health or your feelings were messages telling us to internalize them, they will pass, make you tougher, and build character.

The truth is, holding those feelings inside just made matters worse. It would build and build until I acted out in a negative way, when the stress became too much. It took many years to realize the approach was 100 percent backwards. Mental Health does not discriminate, it impacts absolutely everybody. We need to talk about what bothers us. There are so many people that we all pass everyday on the street or at the workplace that are going through similar things in their own lives.

Every single one of us has been affected by mental health illness, either directly or indirectly. The Mental Health Commission of Canada states that 1 in 5 people in this country will experience a mental health problem or illness in any given year. 1 in 3 workplace disability claims are related to mental health related illnesses. So you are definitely not alone, you do not have to do it by yourself. Nowadays, things have been moving in the right direction. But the stigma is still there, people are still afraid to speak about mental illness because of fear that they will be labeled "crazy", but unfortunately, without seeking the proper help, the consequence could be much more devastating than a label. Almost 4000 Canadians commit suicide every year.

We need to break down the walls around mental health, if you are having a hard time with the many curveballs life

throws at you, remember, you're not alone in this. Talk with your family doctor, there are many options available to all of our brothers and sisters in helping them deal with mental health related issues, such as, stress in the workplace, anxiety, depression and many other problems that they feel they need to "keep to themselves". Morneau Shepell is available to us through our employee assistance program. **You can call 24/7 at 1-844-880-9142.**

At the very least, talk with the ones you love and trust. Explain what you're dealing with and that you need help to make things better. If a friend, family member or co-worker confides in you, keep an open mind, listen, and most of all let them know that you are here for them and will do whatever you can to help.

In Solidarity,
Chris and Kyle





Grievance Committee Report

Ryan Johnson, Chairman

New Face at the Hall Same Fights on the Hill

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday season.

I would like to thank the Union Executive for electing me as your Grievance Chair for the remaining months in the current term before elections in April. I'd like to thank Brian Onyschak for his many years of hard work and dedication while in the position of Grievance Chair and wish him luck in his new role as President. I've learned a lot from Brian over the years, as I have been on the grievance committee, but nothing really prepares you for being in the hot seat.

With that being said, 2018 has started off as a busy one. We have had one member Drug and Alcohol tested already this year. Just a reminder to everyone, if there is ever an incident, or you are ever unsure if you need Union representation ALWAYS request a Shop Steward, or at least, get in touch with one so he can advise you.

We have settled a Grievance that was set to go to arbitration in February for a member that was terminated late last year. We have another termination arbitration scheduled to take place in April.

The Company approached us about a week ago and informed us that they are going to be bringing the concentrate from Lucky Friday to the Property and treat it. They have informed us that they agreed not to do this for a month, and that time has passed. Unfortunately they have run out of room to store it at Trimac or anywhere on the Property and they have a legal right to treat this ore. We may not be happy about it but we are legally obligated to handle this product. A roll out in the trucking department regarding the National Safety Code and Teck's obligation to comply with its rules and regulations has been taking place over the last few weeks.

We have had our Chief Shop Stewards, James Niblow and Steve Limbert, attending the crew talks and have put together a list of questions and concerns that have been coming out of the meetings. Once we have all the questions, we will be taking a closer look at them and look to address them.

Finally, Shop Steward, Jesse Nicoll, will be handling any issues that arise in the Central Shops area while I act as Grievance Chair. Jesse is a Welder in Lead North and has been gaining a lot of experience as a Shop Steward in the past year and will be a great asset for the area. If you need to get a hold of Jesse his shop number is 4-4469.

In solidarity,
Ryan Johnson

LOCAL 480, USW NOMINATIONS EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

The International Constitution of the USW provides for an Executive election at the Local Union level every three (3) years. The constitution states that this election must take place on or near the date of the monthly Membership Meeting in the month of April.

Local 480 Bylaws stipulate that nominations for officers shall be made at the immediately preceding Membership meeting. Notice of the nomination shall be given to the membership at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting. The nomination meeting for Local 480 will be at the regular Membership meeting on **Thursday, March 15th, 2018 at 3:45 p.m.** Executive positions which are eligible for nomination at this meeting are:

- President
 - Ø Vice President
 - Ø Recording Secretary
 - Ø Financial Secretary
 - Ø Treasurer
 - Ø Chair, Grievance Committee
 - Ø Chair, Safety Committee
 - Ø Safety Coordinators (2)
 - Ø Guide
 - Ø Guard (2)
 - Ø Trustees (3)
 - Ø *Trade Rep (1)
 - Ø *Operator Rep (1)
- * Denotes that eligibility requirements do not apply.

Eligibility:

The following is an excerpt from the International's Local Elections Manual:

To be eligible, a member must have attended at least one-third (1/3) of the regular meetings held by the Local Union during the twenty-four (24) month period immediately preceding the month in which the election is to be held.

In addition to the requirements set forth in this and the preceding portion(s) of this Manual, a member must satisfy the following requirements of Article VII, Section 9 of the International Constitution to be eligible to run for Local Union office or Grievance Committee member:

- (a) *The member shall have been in continuous good standing for twenty-four (24) months immediately preceding the month in which the election is held, or if the members' Local Union has been in existence for a lesser period prior to the election, the member must have been in continuous good standing from the time that the member joined such Local Union."*

Issued by:

Local 480, USW

10 February 2018

Teck Resources Ordered to Stop Random Drug Testing at B.C. Coal Mines

Union says company has randomly tested workers for more than 5 years, calls it an intrusion

Teck Resources Ltd. has been ordered by an arbitrator to stop random drug and alcohol testing on workers at all of its B.C. coal mines, effective immediately.

The union representing the workers says such testing — which it calls "an intrusion into workers' rights" — has gone on for more than five years.

"[Teck] apparently pulled names out of a hat somehow and would select people and then force them to go into a random drug and alcohol test," said Alex Hanson, president of United Steelworkers Local 9346.

"We have been against this right from the outset."

Hanson said Teck never showed just cause, but instead tested workers "based on a perceived fear that they have."

No general problem of drug impairment

In 2013, Teck said it would keep randomly testing workers for drugs and alcohol even though the Supreme Court called the

practice "unreasonable" in a ruling in New Brunswick.

This week, arbitrator John Kinzie sided with the workers, ruling that the company's testing is not sufficient enough to justify serious intrusions into coal miners' rights.

"There is not a corresponding 'general' problem in those workplaces with employees being under the influence of, or impaired by, drugs or alcohol sufficient enough to justify those serious intrusions into their rights," Kinzie said as part of his decision.

Teck does pre-employment drug screening as well as post-incident testing, which both the union and the arbitrator agree are justified.

Separately, the company is also dealing with concerns from workers about a series of accidents and explosions at its Elkview mine, including a recent incident Teck calls "a significant pressure event."

Teck is reviewing decision

The company did not agree to an

interview, but sent an emailed statement following the ruling about drug testing.

"At Teck, safety is a core value and we are committed to ensuring a safe work environment for our people," wrote Chris Stannell, communications specialist with Teck.

"Random testing stopped at Teck's Elk Valley mine sites following the decision."

"Teck is reviewing the decision with council before determining next steps," said the statement.

Hanson said workers are pleased with the ruling and the union will be pursuing possible compensation for affected employees.

In December, an Alberta judge ordered oilsands giant Suncor not to proceed with plans to start random drug testing of its employees.

A Suncor spokesperson said, in that case, the company was unhappy with the ruling and would file an immediate appeal.